

It is worth the time, whatever it takes, to do this and get it right. Saving lives and saving money for American families and businesses, protecting Medicare, stopping insurance abuses—this is worth fighting for. I am very proud to be part of a group of people who have placed this as a top priority.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

#### INAUGURATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, today, I rise to recognize the inauguration of President Karzai, as he begins his second term as President of Afghanistan. This milestone presents a unique opportunity to begin a new chapter in Afghanistan's history, which I hope will be characterized by transparency, effective governance, accountability, and an even stronger partnership with America.

Our two governments share common interests in the success of Afghanistan and the stability of the region.

When I met with President Karzai during my September visit to Kabul, we discussed counterinsurgency strategy and the importance of stronger governance at all levels—national, provincial, and district. Counter-insurgency strategy has proven effective throughout the course of history, and good governance is essential for its success.

President Karzai knows that he must garner greater support among the Afghan people for his government because, ultimately, this is a battle for legitimacy between the Afghan government and the insurgents. We will continue to partner with the Afghans to defeat the Taliban, but counter-insurgency cannot succeed if the Afghan people believe their government is plagued by corruption.

I welcome President Karzai's recognition of corruption as a "dangerous enemy of the state" in his inaugural address earlier today.

His intention to create an anti-corruption unit is an important step to this end, but words are not enough. He must match this rhetoric with action, and immediately take steps to effectively address the problem.

No government official is above the law, and all should be held accountable for their actions. Numerous criminal cases involving government officials—such as recent allegations that the Afghan Minister of Mining accepted a \$30 million bribe as part of an illicit deal with a Chinese mining firm—must be thoroughly investigated.

As President Karzai said today, government officials should register their earnings. Those who engage in corrupt behavior should face the full weight of the law and be brought to justice.

Corruption must be addressed for two primary reasons: one, to build the confidence of Afghans in their govern-

ment; and two, to ensure that the government functions more effectively in providing essential services.

In order to fulfill these two goals, I urge President Karzai to appoint competent governors and cabinet members who respect the rule of law and human rights, and are unequivocally committed to the people of Afghanistan. The stakes are too high to revert to cronyism. Now is the time for President Karzai to appoint and support capable, effective, and law-abiding public servants.

The essential defense against the Taliban is an effective Afghan government. As such, I urge President Karzai to work with the United States and other international partners to produce specific and measurable guidelines for combating corruption, improving government transparency and accountability, providing essential services, strengthening rule of law tackling the drug trade, and improving the economic infrastructure.

Clear benchmarks must be set, and progress must be monitored to ensure compliance.

This plan cannot be limited to Kabul. It is critical that government officials in the provinces and districts are well qualified and empowered with the necessary authorities and budgets to improve the lives of all Afghans. We must work together to undermine the Taliban's foothold and role as the de facto provider of rule of law and basic services, especially in southern Afghanistan.

In addition to good governance and essential services a third element of success in counterinsurgency is the training and deployment of effective national security forces.

I welcome President Karzai's stated intention to assume complete Afghan control over security within 5 years. I also echo his calls for NATO partners to take more effective steps to accelerate the training of the Afghan National Army—ANA and Police—ANP.

Currently there are not enough Afghan and international forces on the ground to "clear and hold" against the Taliban. In fact, the number of trained Afghan security forces is less than one-third that of Iraq—a geographically smaller country with nearly the same-sized population.

The training of the ANA and ANP must be expedited to build a stronger force of needed counterinsurgents, with the near-term goal of transferring responsibility to the Afghans.

During my two trips to Afghanistan this year, it was clear that the Afghan people identified security as a key concern, and wanted a swift transition from international to Afghan forces. Americans also hope for a swift transition, so we can eventually end our military presence and bring our brave troops home to their families.

I fundamentally disagree with accusations by some in Afghanistan—including President Karzai—that the U.S. presence in Afghanistan is purely

self-serving. We are committed to working with President Karzai to secure our shared objectives. It has been said that nations have no permanent allies, only permanent interests. As we stand on the cusp of history together, the United States and Afghanistan are allies with shared goals and coinciding interests.

As President Obama outlined in March, it is America's goal to disrupt terrorist networks in Afghanistan, to defeat al-Qaida, and to help to promote a more capable and effective Afghan government. The way to do this is to partner with the Afghan people to defend them against a resurgent Taliban. As Secretary Clinton said, these are mutually reinforcing missions.

There is an underlying urgency to this joint venture, and we cannot succeed without a true partner in the Afghan government.

In his inaugural address, President Karzai said the right things. Now is the time for implementation.

During my visits to Afghanistan, I was impressed by the resolve and vision of the brave people of Afghanistan. In the face of enormous challenges, the majority of Afghans have rejected the Taliban's oppression, and chosen to seek a better life for future generations.

Today represents an opportunity for President Karzai to fulfill the hopes and dreams of his people, and bring greater peace and prosperity to Afghanistan through good governance.

As he begins his second term, President Karzai must forge a path that will lead to a brighter future, free from corruption. We need leadership, resolve, and determination, if we are to be successful in Afghanistan.

#### AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, this week I join my colleagues and the Nation in observing the 88th annual American Education Week.

The United States of America has a rich history of providing a free public education to its children, and the education that millions of students receive every year opens countless doors of opportunity to these students. Teachers, administrators, and support staff in our Nation's communities plant the seeds of knowledge in our students, who are the future of the American economy, American innovation, and American society. And sometimes I do not feel like enough is said of these individuals who have dedicated their lives to the cause of public education and who have touched the lives of millions of children. So this week, let us reflect on the positive impact teachers and schools have on this country.

While enormous strides have been made in expanding access to public education since our Nation's founding, the United States still has a long way to go before we can say that every child in our Nation has access to a high-quality public education. There is